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Front Matter

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This Issue:
Organ Procurement Policy

The Minnesota Academy of Science was formed in 1932 to provide for "the advancement of pure and applied science through the fostering of research, education, and understanding." The Academy is a non-profit organization.

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The Minnesota Academy of Science does not take a stand on issues that may be discussed in articles published in the Journal. Readers should bear in mind that views expressed in these articles are strictly those of the authors.

Biotechnology and the Future

A Special Public Conference on The Revolution in Biology

Wednesday, April 29, 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, April 30, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Sponsored by: The Science Museum of Minnesota

Cosponsored by: The Minnesota Academy of Science, The Governor's Council on Biotechnology, and The Governor's Office of Science and Technology

For 3 billion years natural changes have determined the course of evolution. We have now come to the end of that epoch. Genetic engineering and biotechnology spell the end of billions of years of evolution by chance and selection. From now on, the gene engineers will inevitably and purposively influence the entire character of human life.*

There is no turning back from this new technology. Vast research efforts are underway to change the world's energy, agriculture, and chemical industries. The means are at hand to create a new biology, for producing a new agriculture, a new medicine, and perhaps a new mankind. The promise of biotechnology is exciting. Prospects of a quantum jump in agricultural productivity to relieve the world of starvation, major advances in medicine to cope with disease, improve our health, and to extend our lives.*

While there is ample reason for great optimism, there is also reason to pause. "As we become increasingly confident that this technology can, in fact, be achieved, there are a few major questions to be asked: Is it safe, is it wise, is it moral?"*

This one-day conference will address the challenges and promises of new ventures into the incredibly diverse realm of biotechnology. The conference is designed for the general public interested in new developments in science and the issues and questions surrounding such developments.

The program begins on Wednesday evening, April 29, with a presentation by noted science writer, Jeffrey Fox, who will provide an introduction and overview to biotechnology and some of the major issues facing the field. This background presentation will lead into the keynote presentation on Thursday by Dr. Robert L. Sinsheimer, a molecular biologist, who is currently chancellor of the University of California at Santa Cruz.

Part of the conference will consist of concurrent sessions focusing on the likely impacts of biotechnology on agriculture, health, environment, careers and school curricula, food, economics, and investments. Another session will explore the moral, ethical, and social implications of this emerging technology. Near the end of the day, there will be assessments of the future of biotechnology and its implications in Minnesota. Ample time will be allowed for audience questions and discussions.

This conference would be particularly useful to science teachers, public officials, business people, and those with and interest in understanding more about the emerging potential and implications of this revolutionary field.

A final conference brochure is being prepared. Please call 221-9438 or write the Education Division at the Science Museum of Minnesota for a copy.

*** Genetic Enginering: Life as a Plaything.** R.L. Sinsheimer. *Technology Review,* April, 1983.